

A Big Picture View of the Current Status

of the MTSD English Language Arts Curriculum

Spring 2010 Report

District English Language Arts Curriculum Committee

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This report is a brief summary of the results of a review of the Mequon-Thiensville School District K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum. Beginning in the fall of 2008, members of the committee participated in the following activities as part of this review:

* Read and discussed the Department of Public Instruction *Curriculum Planning Guide for English Language Art*
* Reviewed district assessment data available on student achievement from the WKCE, K-2 ELA, QRI, district writing assessment
* Monitored the progress on the Common Core ELA standards at the state and national level
* Linked discussions from other groups such as the district Response to Intervention Committee, the District Think Tank, and the K-12 literacy specialists meetings
* Reviewed the results on a survey of Words Their Way
* Incorporated other district initiatives such as the District Literacy Action Plan and district goals
* Dialogued on the current status of the ELA curriculum, instruction, and assessment program.

The information below is intended to capture this analysis so that the grade level and content teams that begin the process of revising the ELA curriculum in Fall 2010 can have a starting point for their work. In addition, the subsequent selection of curriculum, instruction, and assessment resources will need to address both the strengths and weaknesses identified by the committee through their analysis.

The chart below shows information collected on the actual instructional practice as perceived by the committee, not the actual curriculum adopted in spring of 2004. At the end of the 2010-2011 school year when the curriculum writing is complete, the committee feels strongly that the newly revised curriculum must:

1. Align with district and school goals for literacy, coherence, student achievement, continuous improvement, and engagement
2. Be inclusive and representative of the diversity of the student needs in district classrooms
3. Provide a common vocabulary and instructional delivery method
4. Provide a scope and sequence of learning, thinking skills, content, and information technology skills
5. Incorporate the changes led by the Common Core Standards Initiative at the national level

The committee deserves the appreciation of the entire staff involved with the delivery of the English Language Arts curriculum for their efforts to prepare for this important work.

| **ELA Strand** | **Elements of Current to Keep** | **Elements of Current Practice to Improve** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Reading | * Strategies * Choice of literature * Authentic text * Differentiated reading levels * Moving from comprehension to analysis and interpretation | * Choice of literature * Reading strategies across the content areas * Differentiation at upper/middle school levels * Availability of texts at various reading levels * How to assess students and use data * How to assess reading levels; text to student (9-12) * Help kids increase reading rate * Select *new* titles |
| Writing | * 6 + 1 trait * Prepared and impromptu writing * Teaching editing * Focus on higher level thinking skills | * Sequence for forms of writing (persuasive, informative, etc.) * Providing opportunities for writing about more than literature (variety of purposes and audiences) * Writing across the curriculum both short constructed response or fully developed essay * Revisit and define the writing portfolios |
| Language | * Skills are applied in student writing | * Consensus on scope and sequence for teaching the grammar and mechanics of writing with benchmarks * Legibility of handwriting * Sequential approach to word study (vocabulary and spelling) * Stems and affixes of Greek/Latin roots (30-15-10 example) |
| Speaking/ Listening | * Cross-disciplinary activities: group discussion, fishbowl, etc. * Embedded approach – variety of topics and levels of formality * Public speaking in curriculum | * More evidence of listening instruction * Develop age appropriate listening and speaking strategies * Effective delivery of oral language * Effective use of audio/visual aids |
| Media Technology | * Increasing variety of media produced * Integration into existing curriculums (i.e. ELA, science, social studies, math) * Content/learning objective stays central – the technology used is a tool, not the objective | * K-12 scope and sequence * Development of assessment tools and portfolio * Analyzing choice of media for purpose, audience * Integration of relevant/emerging technology and technology tools (hardware and software) * Appropriate technical support for relevant/grade appropriate technology tools * Balance of media production with appreciation/analysis |
| Research/ Inquiry | * Evaluation of sources * Process of information collecting * Documentation, crediting sources * Multi-disciplinary with content and Information and Technology Literacy * Curiosity and question driven * Student driven research choices | * Review how students synthesize information * Keep up with new forms or sources * Teach kids to collaborate * Identify “truth” in information – who is writing and what is their agenda * Varying modes of publishing student research |